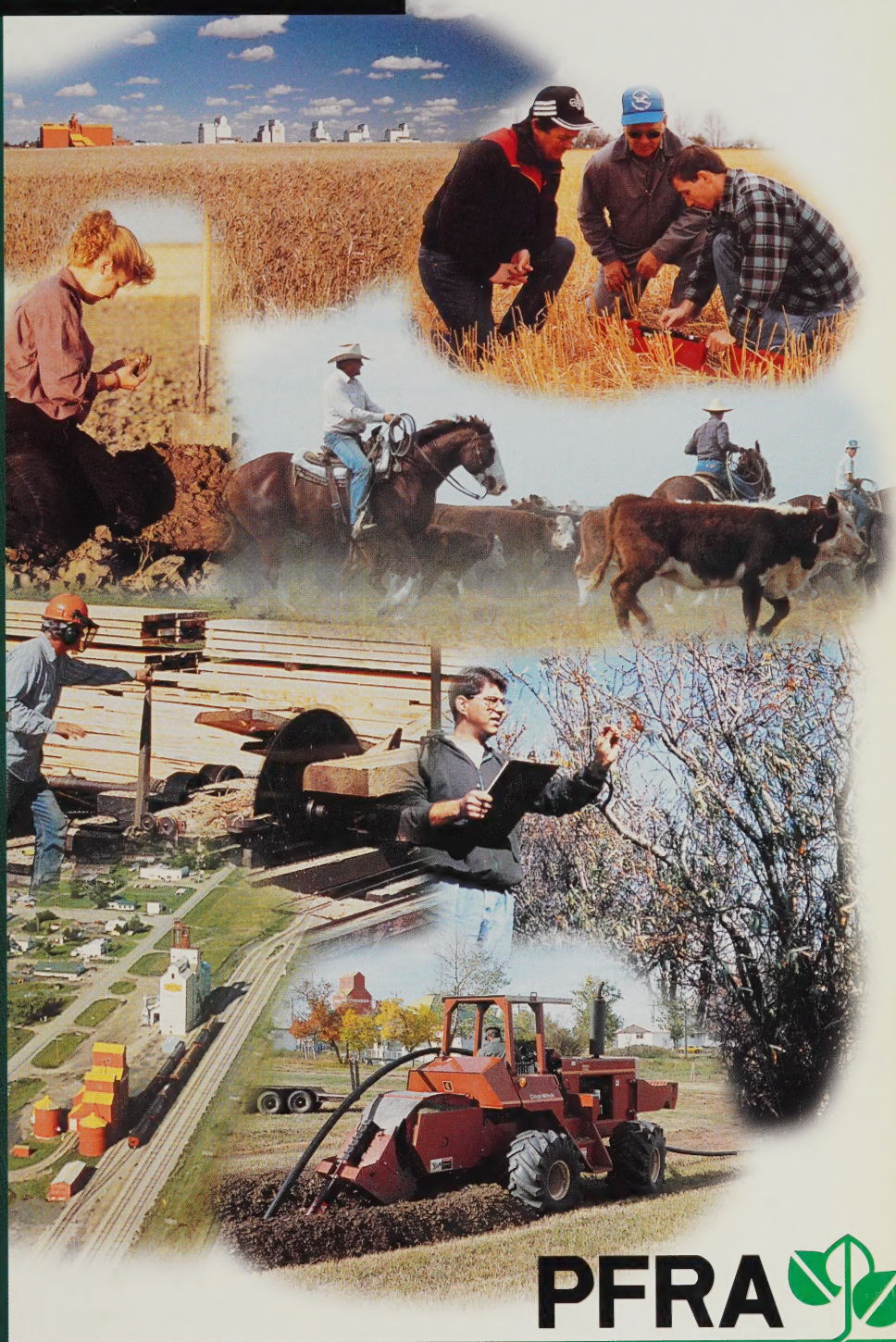


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PFRA 



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

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Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration

PRAIRIE LAND AND PEOPLE: THE ORIGINS OF PFRA

PFRA was created in response to an economic and environmental disaster that, in the 1930's, threatened the social and economic survival of 900,000 people on the Canadian Prairies. That disaster, known as the "Dirty Thirties," resulted from a series of drought years - the impacts of which were magnified by several decades of rapid environmental and cultural change on the Prairies.

Between 1850 and 1910, the Prairies were home to native people, metis, ranchers and farmers, each of whom understood and used resources differently. How each group used and altered the natural ecosystem depended on their needs and perception of the value of the resource base. Native people, metis and ranchers pursued a relatively harmonious relationship with the natural environment. Annual crop farming - encouraged by a government policy that was intended to attract settlers to the west - created a new land use.



Soil drifting due to drought.

The settlers came, but their farming practices had been developed in more humid environments, and did not work well in the semi-arid southern Prairies. Prairie soils required careful management to grow crops in moisture deficient conditions without causing land

degradation. Between 1910 and 1935, farming in the Prairies went through periods of adequate moisture and extreme drought, which resulted in either bumper crops or crop failures. Although agricultural production knowledge and experience grew with each drought cycle, Prairie farmers were not prepared for the lengthy drought that was to come.

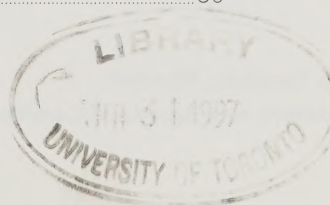
As a result, serious consideration was given in the 1930's to relocating the pioneers who had travelled west to build a new life. Although this was a partial solution, and some families were relocated, it was not in keeping with the pioneering spirit. Instead, a concerted effort was mounted to confront the challenge - to counter the damage that farming practices had inflicted and to apply new solutions in extremely adverse circumstances. In April 1935, the federal government faced the daunting task of reclaiming the Prairies by creating the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA). For PFRA, the immediate task and its purpose ever since, has been to work with Prairie people to:

... secure the rehabilitation of the drought and soil drifting areas in the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and to develop and promote within those areas, systems of farm practice, tree culture, water supply, land utilization and land settlement that will afford greater economic security (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, 1935).

Since the passage of the PFR Act, we have fulfilled our mandate in ways that respond to the specific issues of the times. In the earliest days, the major focus was on water supply, consolidating marginal land into community pastures, and demonstrating soil conservation methods. An emphasis on large dam and irrigation project development followed in the 50's and 60's. The focus shifted to municipal infrastructure in the 70's. Drought and land degradation issues brought a return to PFRA's conservation roots in the 80's. Most recently, broader rural economic and environmental issues have been our priority.

Table of Contents

Prairie Land and People: The Origins of PFRA	inside cover
Message from the Minister	2
Director General's Message	3
The Rural Prairies in the 21st Century	4
Agriculture and Agri-Food in Canada	7
Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration	9
A Strategic Approach	18
Our Response	23
Resource Care	23
Rural Growth	32
Measuring Success	43
PFRA Resources	44
Next Steps	48
Poised for the Future	50



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Every time I reread the original documents which created the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) back in 1935, I am struck by the farsighted vision of the founders of this invaluable Prairie institution – born out of the crisis and despair of the “Dirty Thirties.”



With its two-pronged mandate for resource conservation and rural development, PFRA was then and is today a cornerstone of federal action in rural Western Canada. The sustainability and developmental issues which have confronted Prairie people have changed over the past 61 years, but the role played by PFRA has remained constantly relevant.

In the 1990's – with the globalization of markets, new trade agreements, the need for ever more efficiency and productivity, the thirst for greater diversification and value-added growth, increasing pressures on our natural resource base, the inexorable march of science and technology and the tight disciplines of fiscal responsibility – change is now occurring on a scale and at a rate which are absolutely unprecedented. Indeed, change has become the defining characteristic of this last decade of the 20th century.

As a practical, locally-based Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), PFRA is a key instrument in helping Prairie people cope with this era of change. But more than just “coping,” we want to master change and shape it to our best advantage. That's where PFRA excels.

As more and more individuals and communities search for new ways to diversify toward higher-valued crop production mixes, value-added processing and further processing, before-market and after-market rural services, home businesses and a wide range of other new opportunities – all of which rely upon the prudent utilization of Prairie land and water resources – PFRA is here to help. It offers an array of tools to support rural people in generating their ideas for sustainable development. It assists in identifying resource constraints and in sound planning to overcome them.

The work of PFRA is good for the economy and good for the environment. It plays a leadership role in bringing together AAFC's policies on adaptation, rural renewal and environmental sustainability for the benefit of Prairie people.

As we position ourselves for the 21st century, PFRA will continue to help rural Western Canada create new economic growth and good long-term jobs, while wisely conserving our priceless land and water resources.

**Ralph Goodale, Minister
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S MESSAGE

Change is not new to PFRA. We have always taken pride in our ability to adapt to the conditions and needs of the day.

For over 60 years, PFRA has helped Prairie people face the challenges and seize the opportunities our land and water resources present. PFRA's activities have evolved since the 1930's, but we have kept constant our focus on sustainable rural development.

The 1990's have brought unprecedented change to the Prairies and its people - change as a result of new trade rules and markets, new technologies, reduced government expenditures, shifting demographics and increasing public concern for the environment. Prairie people, PFRA's clients, are adapting at an ever-faster pace.

As a result, PFRA has significantly changed the way it does business. In spite of downsizing, field offices have been strengthened to place our expertise closer to our clients. Partnerships with the provinces and community and private sector groups have also been enhanced. These changes have enabled PFRA to better respond as a team to "resource care" and "rural growth" issues.

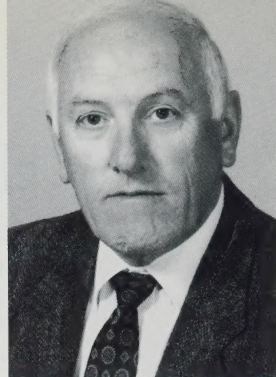
Our Business Plan outlines the strategic directions, goals, key issues and operational strategies we will pursue in the next few years. The approach is consistent for all of PFRA's areas of operations, which extends from the Peace River region of British Columbia to the eastern boundary of Manitoba. Specific shorter-term objectives will be addressed in response to regional priorities.

PFRA continues to play an active role in helping clients care for and develop their land and water resources. At the same time, we are applying our expertise to the new challenges of encouraging rural growth, diversifying agricultural production, and ensuring that development is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

PFRA will deliver Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada policies and programs for adaptation, environmental sustainability and rural development on the Prairies. And we will retain our longstanding capability to deliver programs to rural clients in response to natural disasters or policy initiatives.

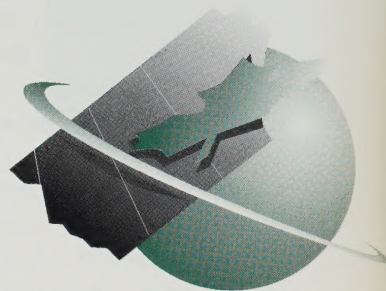
As the new millennium nears, we look forward with anticipation to continuing our key role as a member of the rural Prairie community.

Bernie Sonntag,
Director General, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration



THE RURAL PRAIRIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Canadians are encountering increasing change in the ways they live and do business. For the rural Prairies, and for the agriculture and food sector, incentives for change are coming from many directions.



Trade

Canadians face greater competition than ever before - in traditional export markets, in emerging markets and within Canada. International agreements have opened new markets. Producers and processors are being challenged to find niche markets, while improving productivity. At the same time, they must maintain Canada's reputation for high quality and safety standards.

Changing Consumer Preferences

Consumers are looking for new products. Their preferences encourage and reward the sector's move to diversification and value-added processing. Transportation policy changes further stimulate these efforts, although the adjustment cost to grain farmers is significant. Prairie producers are responding by developing new products from oilseeds, vegetables, herbs and spices, hogs and cattle, wild game, flax and wheat fibre, and through activities such as agroforestry and the manufacture of products like ethanol, cosmetics and biodegradable plastic.

Commercial production
of Saskatoon berry jam
at Last Mountain Berry
Farms.



Fiscal Policy

Fiscal restraint is playing a major role in how the agriculture and agri-food sector operates. Government financial support programs are shrinking. Increasingly, producers are taking their cues from the markets - producing what the markets want rather than simply marketing what they have always produced.

Changing Rural Areas

Rural communities are affected by change as well. Rural populations, and particularly farm populations, continue to decline. Farm families depend on towns for services and jobs. In turn, towns depend on farm families to support those services, fill jobs and buy goods. As rural populations decline, the tax base of many small Prairie communities erodes, as does their ability to provide services. Rural people are being challenged to find and develop wealth-creating opportunities based on the inherent assets of their communities.



Greenhouses offer opportunities to expand the horticulture industry to include products such as these cucumber seedlings.

Dugout north of
Moose Jaw,
Saskatchewan.



Environmental Awareness

Canadians want a healthy environment. Like other countries around the world, Canada is committed to maintaining biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gases and showing better stewardship of renewable resources. The environment is quickly becoming a factor in trade. Canada's "clean and green" image can bring a competitive business advantage. However, as the global population increases, so do food supply requirements and demands on land and water resources. Prairie people are being challenged to find and use farming and other development practices that are sustainable, both environmentally and economically.



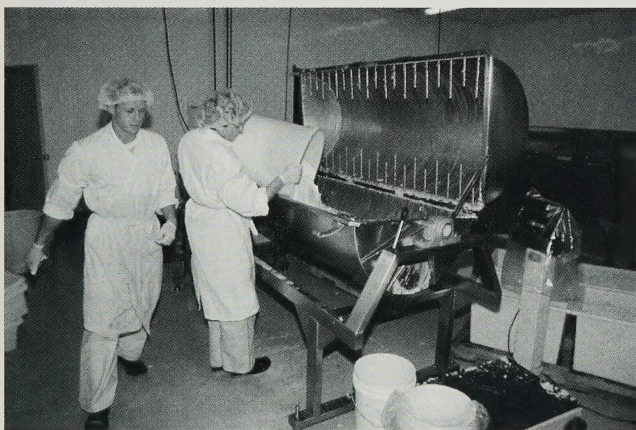
Aerial view of multi-use dams and shelterbelts in Manitoba. The shelterbelts block wind and trap snow. The dams control runoff and provide water storage.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD IN CANADA

One of the Government of Canada's key strategies is to foster job creation and economic growth. Within the agriculture and food sector, the federal government has a vision which complements the goals of provincial governments and industry:

Vision

A growing, competitive, market-oriented agriculture and agri-food industry that is profitable and responds to the changing food and non-food needs of domestic and international customers is less dependent on government support and contributes to the well-being of all Canadians and the quality of life in rural communities while achieving farm financial security, environmental sustainability and a safe, high-quality food supply.



Adding the "secret" sauce to macaroni salad at Delsa Foods.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is supporting the sector in achieving this vision. Departmental business lines target four specific areas:

- expanding global and domestic markets
- innovative practices for on-farm production and value-added processing which can be sustained indefinitely and which balance environmental, economic and social factors
- prosperity for the sector and rural communities
- product safety and quality

Each Branch of the Department is contributing to one or more business lines.



Straight combining lentils.

PRAIRIE FARM REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

Mandate and Mission

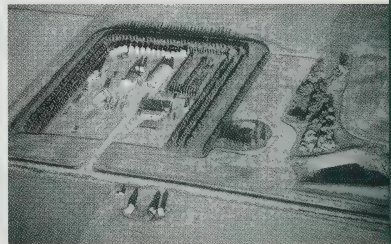
The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) is a Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada operating exclusively in Western Canada. The PFRA mandate is defined by the Department of Agriculture Act and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation (PFR) Act of 1935.

The PFR Act provides Parliamentary authority to:

... secure the rehabilitation of the drought and soil drifting areas ... and to develop and promote within those areas systems of farm practice, tree culture, water supply, land utilization and land settlement that will afford greater economic security ... through the development, construction, promotion, operation and maintenance of any project or scheme ... or agreements with any province, municipality or person....

The scope of this role is reflected in the PFRA mission statement:

To work with Prairie people to build a viable agricultural industry and to support a sound rural economy, healthy environment and a high quality of life.



Farm shelterbelts near
Kindersley, Saskatchewan.

THE BUSINESS OF PFRA

- Sustainable Rural Development

PFRA's area of business is sustainable rural development.

We are guided by the following beliefs:

- sustainable rural development can only occur when economic development is in harmony with the environment and the needs and aspirations of Prairie people
- responsible stewardship of land and water is essential to the long-term health, both economic and environmental, of the Prairie region
- PFRA will contribute to sustainable rural development by focusing on two goal areas - resource care and rural growth



Riders round-up cattle at Webb Community Pasture in southwest Saskatchewan.

Resource Care

Prairie land and water resources used in a manner which can be sustained indefinitely

Long-term care and stewardship of land and water resources is necessary for rural development. Growth will not be sustained unless agricultural resources are used responsibly.

Spreading straw onto erodible land at Crystal Lake, Saskatchewan with a bale shredder/spreader.



Rural Growth

A robust, growing and diversified economy within the agricultural areas of the Prairies

Rural communities rely on their comparative advantages to create a favourable economic climate for investment and wealth generation. Some of these advantages are land and water-related.

Clients

PFRA serves several distinct groups of rural people:

- primary producers - farmers and ranchers
- rural entrepreneurs - agri-business and non-agricultural business
- organizations - sectoral and local groups, and local governments



Elk Valley Processors raises elk to supply antler velvet to Alpine Health International Inc. at Kitscoty, Alberta.

Programs and Services

Within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, PFRA implements policies and delivers programs related to adaptation, environmental sustainability and rural issues. PFRA programs and services (Table 1) benefit Prairie people and contribute to Canada's commitment to sustainable rural development. PFRA's main products are:

Technical Expertise

PFRA provides technical expertise to clients in a wide variety of areas, particularly those related to the management of soil and water resources. Expertise in areas such as surface and ground water hydrology, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), engineering design, water quality, agroforestry and soil conservation contributes to the success of projects.

Supply canals on Rush Lake, Saskatchewan irrigation project, showing new concrete and old timber structures.



Facilitation and Coordination

Within its mandate, PFRA plays a coordinating role across the Prairies. Projects may involve the three levels of government, sectoral organizations and individuals.



Laying polyethelene liner and cushion sand for an irrigation canal, Eastend Irrigation Project.

Financial/Material Assistance

PFRA provides limited funding through various programs and other activities such as the Southwest Saskatchewan Irrigation Project, which provides irrigation opportunities, the Shelterbelt Program, which provides trees for windbreak planting and the Community Pasture system, which provides livestock grazing and breeding services.

Taken together, the products and services PFRA offers are a set of tools for promoting and implementing the principles of sustainable development throughout the Prairies.

Young shelterbelt in Manitoba mulched with straw.



Table 1 - PFRA Programs and Services



Taking out cattle at
Coteau Community
Pasture.

Programs & Services	Description
Land Resources	Supports the sustainable use of Prairie land resources by developing and promoting land use practices that integrate environmental, economic and social factors.
Rural Adaptation	Supports rural development in the Prairies by providing the necessary resource-related information and other assistance to identify and overcome constraints to diversification and rural business development.
Rural Water Development Program	Supports the development of dependable, secure water sources in rural areas by providing technical and financial assistance to water user groups, producers and communities.
Southwest Saskatchewan Irrigation	Maintains six irrigation projects in Southwest Saskatchewan which provide water for individual, municipal, provincial and international users.
Irrigation Diversification Centres	Provides demonstration activities and applied research, including testing of crops suitable for irrigation, through the Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre and the Saskatchewan Irrigation Development Centre.
Shelterbelt Program	Produces and distributes tree seedlings for farmstead, field, wildlife and roadside conservation and diversification plantings throughout the Prairies.
Community Pastures Program	Removes unsuitable land from annual crop production, provides wildlife habitat and summer grazing for cattle and provides bulls to encourage high-quality, long-term cattle production.
Permanent Cover Program (1991 - 2021)	Most of the activity from 1997 to 2016 will be monitoring marginal crop land which was removed from annual crop production by converting it, under legal caveat, to permanent forage.
Tax Deferral Program	This national initiative allows for the deferral of taxes on income from sales of breeding livestock due to drought. PFRA is responsible for the designation of eligible areas.
Federal Provincial Agreements (delivered by PFRA)	These cost-sharing tools are used to enhance specific activity in priority areas. For example, the Canada-Saskatchewan Partnership Agreement on Water-Based Economic Development (PAWBED) and the Canada-Manitoba Partnership Agreement on Municipal Water Infrastructure (PAMWI) alleviated water-related constraints to economic development. The Partnership Agreement on Rural Development (PARD) assisted economic development initiatives in rural Saskatchewan. Adaptation is targeted through programs such as the Agri-Food Innovation Fund (AFIF), managed through a Canada-Saskatchewan agreement, and the Canada Agriculture Infrastructure Program (CAIP). The agricultural components of Canada's Green Plan provided for cooperation in developing and adopting environmentally-sound production practises for the agri-food industry on the Prairies. Current agreements sunset between 1997 and 2000.

Harvesting conifers for shelterbelt plantings.



Aerial view of the Shelterbelt Centre at Indian Head, Saskatchewan.



Seasonal employees pack and label trees for distribution to farmers planting shelterbelts.

Structure

PFRA delivers its programs and services through five regions (Figure 1) that reflect the different landscapes and provincial boundaries of the Prairies - Northern Alberta and British Columbia's Peace River Region, Southern Alberta, Northern Saskatchewan, Southern Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Within the regions, 22 district offices are strategically located to serve as focal points for delivering PFRA's programs and services.

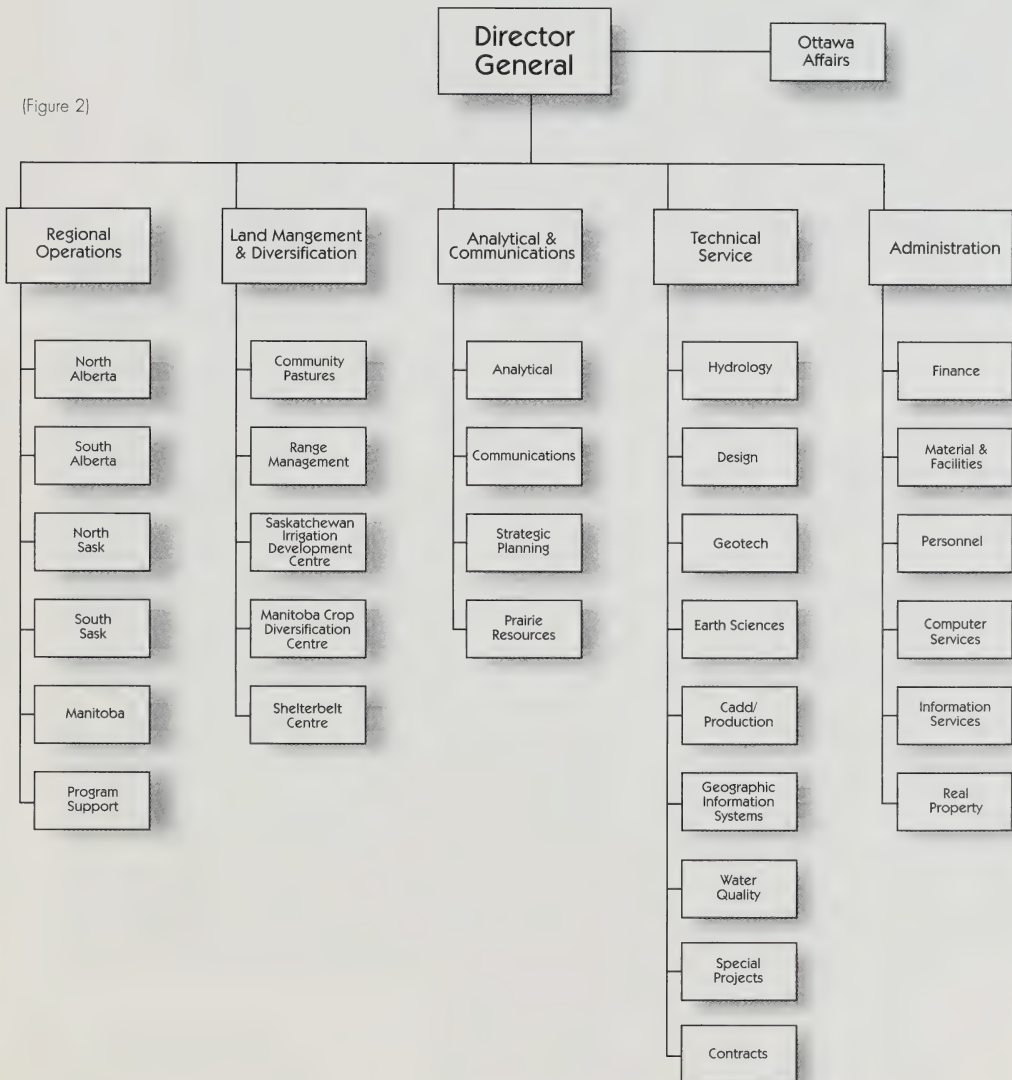
Additional support and expertise is available through PFRA's headquarters in Regina and regional offices in Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg. Rural clients can also access services and expertise through the Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre in Carberry, the Saskatchewan Irrigation Development Centre in Outlook, the Shelterbelt Centre in Indian Head, Saskatchewan and a network of 87 community pastures.

(Figure 1)



Through intensive restructuring in 1993-94, PFRA was able to improve service delivery and increase client contact while decreasing and re-shaping the workforce. Since the connection between PFRA and its clients occurs primarily at District Offices, emphasis was placed on maintaining or increasing the technical capabilities within these offices. In addition, PFRA's central technical services were realigned to better serve the District offices and their clients. The restructured organization (Figure 2) is intended to serve client and PFRA needs for the next several years. Minor modifications will be made as required to improve client service and as new issues emerge.

(Figure 2)



A STRATEGIC APPROACH

PFRA has been involved in sustainable development since 1935; however, its activities have evolved over time. In the 1930's, the major emphasis was on land reclamation and developing local water resources. From the 1950's to the 1970's, larger regional water supply development was emphasized. Increased public awareness of environmental issues in the 1980's, accentuated by drought conditions, made soil conservation a priority.

Government policy shifts in the mid-1990's moved Canadian producers and processors away from subsidies and toward dependance on the marketplace. The sector's increasing self-reliance coincides with a role change for governments - from one of intervention, to that of facilitator. As well, stakeholders are becoming more involved in making decisions about projects and programs that affect their economic well-being.



Gardiner Dam. The Gardiner and Qu'Appelle dams form Lake Diefenbaker which provides water for domestic, industrial, irrigation, power generation and recreational use in southern Saskatchewan.

Swathing field peas.



PFRA will respond to these challenges by:

- providing regional leadership for the department in formulating Prairie-based policy and strategies that address environmental, adaptation and rural issues in an integrated way;
- incorporating social, economic and environmental principles into present and future policies and programs;
- delivering specific federal programs and federal-provincial agreements through local offices on the Prairies;
- working with other governments and other federal departments to improve policy and program co-ordination and increase the overall benefits of sustainable development initiatives.

Feeding cattle over winter,
north of the drought-prone
Hanna area in Alberta.



Guiding Principles

To ensure success, PFRA will adopt the following guiding principles:

- Ensure its activities address sustainable development challenges.

All programs will centre on land and water resources and rural growth, linking economic, environmental and social needs. Activities will help clients deal with emerging issues by providing innovative solutions through applied research, demonstration and technology transfer.

- Work with local leaders to identify land and water-based economic development projects that can be implemented in an environmentally responsible way.

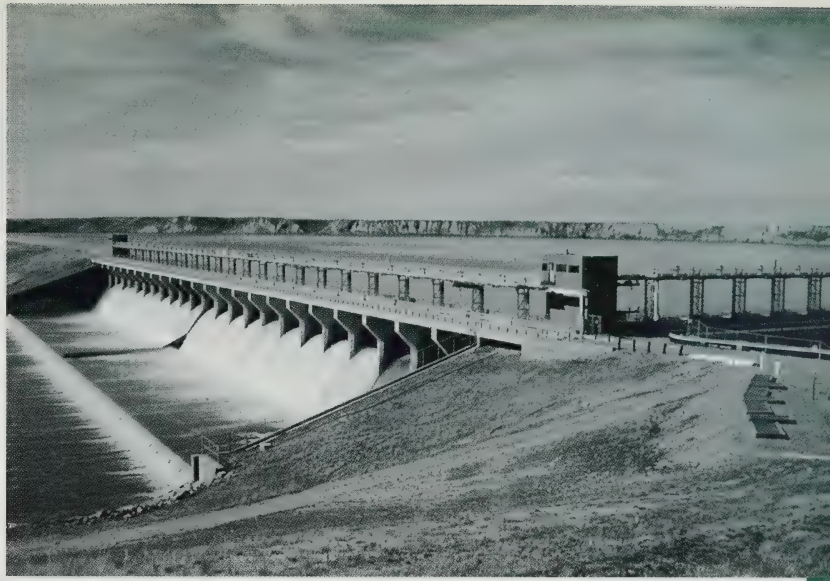
Local leadership and community involvement is essential to address the challenges and opportunities in land, water and other rural issues.

- Develop and strengthen formal and informal partnerships with other federal departments and agencies, other levels of government, industry and organizations to share information and co-ordinate activities and programs.



SIDC employee addressing spectators at SIDC field day.

Bassano Dam in Alberta.



Rural issues tend to cut across sectors and jurisdictions. Partnerships are essential to help clients meet specific needs while maximizing the benefits of any government and industry funding. Interprovincial partnerships on resource and rural issues can result in stronger, more focused responses to common concerns.

An immediate priority is to strengthen the partnership between PFRA and Research Branch to ensure that Prairie clients have the best resource care information possible for making their decisions.

- Develop an ongoing communications strategy to emphasize its role in sustainable development.



Waterfowl at a marsh.

The strategy will emphasize the integration of social, economic and environmental principles and how we are working to incorporate this concept into the Prairie culture.

- Enable clients and empower staff with its programs and activities.

Clients and partners will be involved in the planning and decision-making process to ensure that needs and expectations are met. Staff will have the authority and accountability to make decisions at the local level.

- Emphasize staff development to ensure they can address client needs in a changing environment.

PFRA's staff are its most valuable resource, but in order to remain effective in providing timely client response, continued effort is needed to develop skills and expertise.



Fish habitat protection project. Stream is fenced to keep cattle from destroying stream banks and contaminating water.

First place - Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability (CMAAS) art contest.



OUR RESPONSE

The outcome PFRA hopes to achieve is sustainable rural development. However, eventual results will be influenced by numerous factors, many of which are best addressed by others. PFRA has identified resource care and rural growth as areas where it can make significant contributions.

There is also an appreciation that the specific issues that PFRA has selected within these areas, are complex and beyond the scope of any single agency.

A co-operative effort between all governments and the private sector is essential.

PFRA will target its activities to the specific issues identified in the following section.

Resource Care

- Sustainable use of Prairie land and water resources



Stubble stripper used to cut strips of stubble at varying heights to catch snow near Martensville, Saskatchewan.



Broderick reservoir.

Specific Issues

1. Uses and management practices that threaten the long-term productivity of land resources.
2. Threats to the availability and quality of water resources.
3. Public awareness of land and water issues.
4. Multiple uses of land.
5. Access to information and support.

PFRA Responses to Resource Care Issues

Issue 1

Uses and management practices that threaten the long-term productivity of land resources

Production systems affect land resources. Where farming and other land use practices are not in harmony with the long-term capability of the resource, future generations will have reduced capacity to be competitive, both at home and internationally.



Direct
seeding into
stubble
conserves
topsoil.

Salinity seep east of Avonlea,
Saskatchewan. Soil salinity is a
major concern in the Prairies.



Activities

PFRA will work with government and sector partners to reduce land degradation problems by:

- investigating current and potential land degradation problems resulting from agricultural and value-added production practices
- developing and promoting practices to prevent and/or alleviate these problems
- providing tree materials for field and farm shelterbelts, riparian areas and wildlife habitat and woodlot planting
- managing PFRA Community Pastures to conserve marginal lands and critical wildlife areas, while providing clients with livestock grazing services
- monitoring long-term contracts for marginal land use and providing information and advice to clients regarding economic opportunities for those lands
- developing, sharing and interpreting databases and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) products that indicate and interpret the health of land resources.



Applying herbicide to newly established shelterbelt.



Using a straw spreader on a combine provides trash cover to hold down topsoil when the wind blows, conserve soil moisture and improve soil tilth.

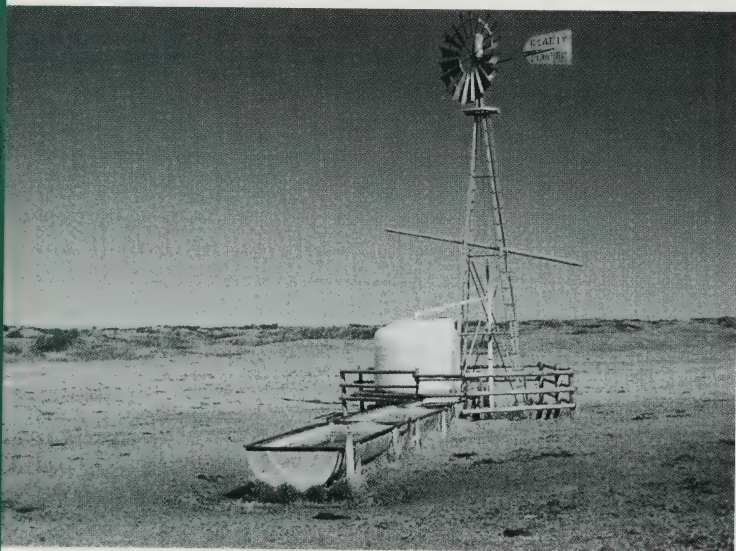


Grassed waterway seeded with slender wheat grass and brome to prevent gully erosion at Wilkie, Saskatchewan.

Issue 2

Threats to the availability and quality of water resources

Water is a precious resource in the Prairies. The availability of good quality water in sufficient amounts and at the right time and place is threatened by many factors. Droughts occur frequently. Production practices affect surface and groundwater sources. The projected intensification of crop, livestock and processing systems, along with additional rural and urban economic diversification, will further increase pressure on water supplies.



Reliable Prairie winds power a windmill, ensuring this watering trough is full.

Cattle grazing in shelterbelt-protected pasture.



Activities

PFRA will work to ensure adequate supplies of quality water by:

- determining the yield capability and the vulnerability to contamination, of specific Prairie water resource systems through activities such as aquifer and hydrological basin studies
- investigating and improving the efficiency of irrigated crop production practices through the SIDC and the MCDC, and with the Research Branch and others as partners
- investigating and demonstrating on-farm water supply and quality improvement practices, for example, snow trapping, riparian management, aeration, other farm dugout and well treatments
- assisting local governments and communities in developing and implementing water supply and conservation plans

Irrigation mist obscures spectators at SIDC field day.



Measuring dugout capacity in British Columbia Peace District.

- sharing the cost of water supply and quality improvement projects through the Rural Water Development Program
- incorporating long-term drought mitigation measures into PFRA's activities and participating in developing and maintaining a Prairie-wide drought reporting network
- co-ordinating water development strategies with provincial agencies under the umbrellas of the federal-provincial Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on Water
- promoting best management practices by developing and disseminating water quality and quantity information in rural areas.



Laying the Drinkwater/Belle Plaine,
Saskatchewan water pipeline.



Issue 3

Public awareness of land and water issues

Land and water issues are complex and often not well understood. Land and water policy decisions have enormous social, environmental and economic consequences.



Community pastures provide habitat for threatened species such as the Burrowing Owl.

Activities

PFRA will increase public awareness of Prairie land and water issues to ensure that usage decisions are in the best long-term interests of all members of society by:

- increasing the understanding of land and water stewardship and management in agricultural areas through joint awareness campaigns such as the Tri-Province MOU on extension and awareness materials.



Tundra swans and ducks enjoying Alberta wetland.

Issue 4

Multiple uses of land

Land use disagreements will likely increase because urban areas are growing, fewer people are directly involved in agriculture and the livestock and processing sectors are expanding. Issues such as agricultural production versus bio-diversity and wildlife protection, right to farm legislation and land use zoning can best be addressed if all stakeholders are aware of and understand the full range of consequences for potential land uses.



Ducks Unlimited constructed wetland project at PFRA's Wellington Pasture.

Activities

PFRA will reduce conflicting land use concerns by:

- involving all stakeholders in developing and implementing strategies to resolve multiple land use issues on PFRA Community Pastures
- promoting, advising and participating in community-based resource development planning
- analysing and providing information on the impact of agricultural practices on global environmental issues.

White-tail deer seeks refuge in bush.



Issue 5

Access to information and support

Rural people need information on the long-term environmental consequences of economic development activities if they are to make choices that prevent future social, economic and environmental liabilities. Obtaining information and support in this area is often more difficult in rural areas than in urban centres.



Potato vines left on the ground over winter, with no fall tillage, provide some cover to conserve soil.



Transplanting seedlings into plastic mulch - SIDC.

Activities

PFRA will provide rural people with the resource care information they need by:

- providing information in a timely manner through 25 accessible rural office locations
- linking clients to appropriate sources of expertise and providing follow-up assistance when required.



Setting up wind measuring equipment.

Rural Growth

A robust, growing and diversified economy
within agricultural areas

Specific Issues

1. Suitability of land and water resources for economic growth
2. Reliance on a limited range of crops and livestock species
3. Opportunities for more value-added processing and other enterprises
4. Changing rural infrastructure needs
5. Access to information and support
6. Special issue response



Farm equipment modified for logging operation in Alberta. An on-site sawmill is used to increase the value of logs harvested on private land. Sustainable logging of farm woodlots can provide a steady source of income.

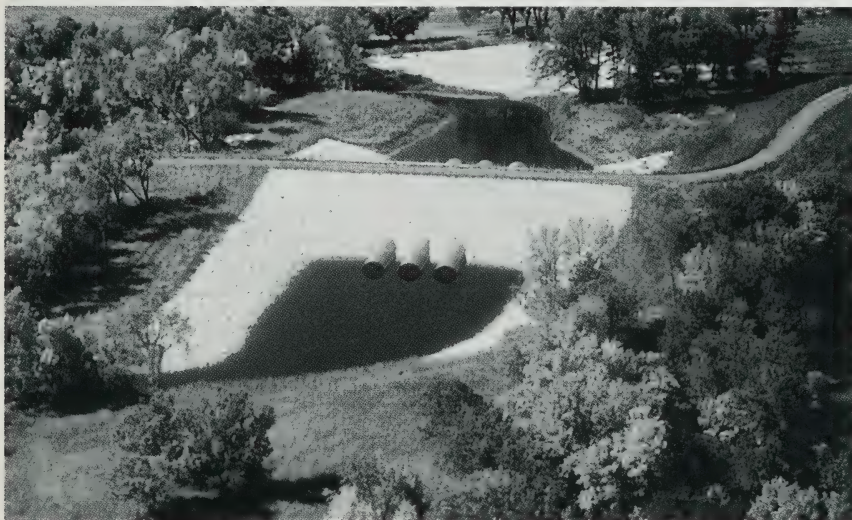


PFRA Responses to Rural Growth Issues

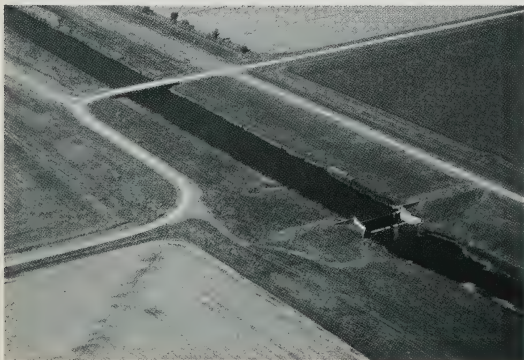
Issue 1

Suitability of land and water resources for economic growth

The availability and capacity of land and water resources to support economic development is limited. Overuse of these resources will create future economic, social and environmental liabilities.



Carman Diversion Canal,
Manitoba.



Activities

PFRA will promote the appropriate use of land and water resources for economic growth by:

- identifying opportunities and limits to land and water resources for regional, commodity-specific and other economic initiatives
- providing clients with technical services, information and advice to help overcome land and water constraints to rural growth
- sharing the cost of planning and developing water systems that foster rural growth through the Rural Water Development Program
- developing, sharing and interpreting resource use databases and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) products
- managing fragile lands for long-term livestock grazing, contributing to plant and wildlife biodiversity, and promoting additional uses of this resource through the Community Pasture system.

Mares used for gathering PMU are pastured for the summer at Ellice-Archie Community Pasture.



Coriander is one of many higher-value herbs and spices tested under irrigated conditions at SIDC.

Issue 2

Reliance on a limited range of crops and livestock species

Crop and livestock production is very specialized in parts of the Prairies. As a result, farm income stability is threatened by fluctuating commodity prices, and potentially lucrative markets for other types of crops and livestock are not captured.



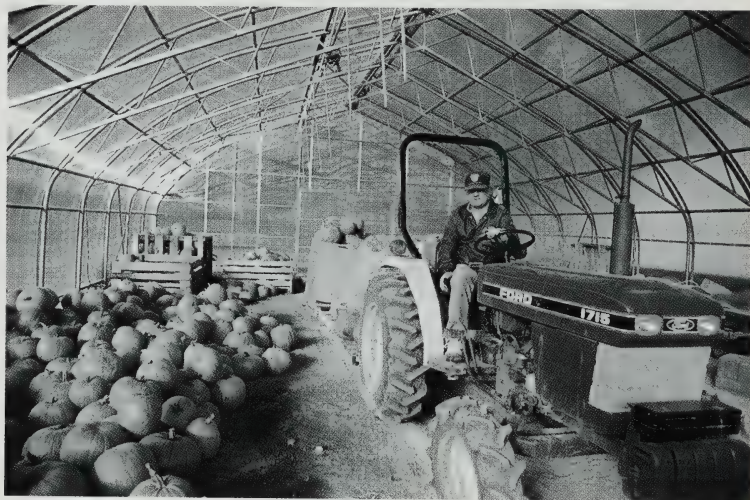
Bison raised near Wiseton, Saskatchewan.

Activities

PFRA will encourage the production of a greater range of crops and livestock by:

- developing, demonstrating and providing information on the production of suitable alternate crops on the Prairies through the Saskatchewan Irrigation Development Centre (SIDC), the Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre (MCDC) and the Shelterbelt Centre, and with partners such as Research Branch and provincial governments
- investigating alternative resource uses that provide additional crop and livestock production opportunities
- providing technical support to industry-led strategic initiatives that enhance new, value-added primary production
- supporting the development of sector or commodity-specific groups that focus on producing and marketing new crops or types of livestock.

Pumpkins grown at SIDC.



Reservoirs for an effluent irrigation project at Elite Hog Farms in Saskatchewan.

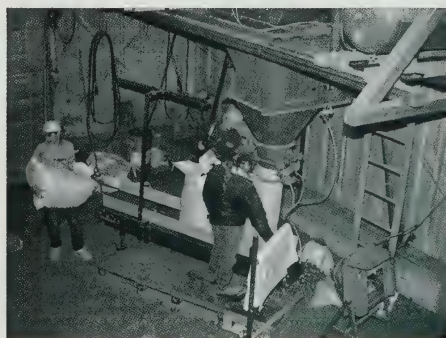
Issue 3

Opportunities for more value-added processing and other enterprises

Value-added processing industries are not common on the Prairies, however, recent changes to domestic transportation and international trade policies have created a positive environment for such enterprises. Export trade in value-added products is growing rapidly. Increased processing of these products - provided this can be done profitably - will provide more jobs for rural people than primary production and will help diversify the Prairie economy.



Bales of alfalfa surround Elcon Forage. The alfalfa is compressed and cubed, and then bagged for shipping.

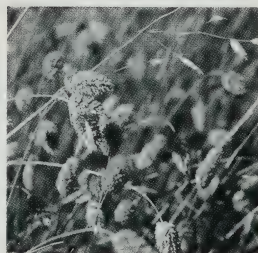


Activities

PFRA will support the growth of value-added processing by:

- providing technical support on land and water issues to help clients undertake preliminary planning and feasibility assessments, and develop concepts, projects, products and businesses
- supporting, where appropriate, organized groups that wish to develop and market value-added products
- investigating with partners, potential value-added processing opportunities
- promoting, and where appropriate, assisting others to develop rural entrepreneurship skills
- directing clients to other partners for business development information, specific expertise on value-added processing and capital assistance
- promoting and providing information on value-added opportunities for new and alternative crops in the Prairies, through 25 local offices and with partners.

Farming fish at a Lake Diefenbaker cage culture operation.



Swathing
canary seed.

Issue 4

Changing rural infrastructure needs

While technological advances have enabled globally competitive industries to operate successfully outside major urban centres, the infrastructure needed to attract such enterprises is costly and requires innovative financing methods to bring it to rural communities. As well, environmental regulations require high standards and diligence in planning, constructing and operating these businesses.



Laflèche dam and spillway structure in southern Saskatchewan.

Activities

PFRA will support rural infrastructure development by:

- helping communities and rural businesses to identify infrastructure constraints and implement solutions
- investigating, planning and providing information on developing water supplies for communities, regions and industry
- investigating, planning and providing information on developing waste management systems for municipalities and industry
- targeting federal-provincial agreement funds (Infrastructure programs in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) toward developing the necessary rural infrastructure
- supporting, where appropriate, the development and growth of community economic development organizations and their activities.



Farmer getting water from a truck loading facility in Manitoba.

Issue 5

Access to information and support

Rural people need easy access to a wide array of information if they are to successfully develop new enterprises and expand existing businesses. Information on regulations, market intelligence, technology and sources of support is essential, but is often more difficult to obtain in rural areas than urban centres.



Picking trickle-irrigated strawberries.

Activities

PFRA will support the information needs of rural clients by:

- providing resource related and other information in a timely manner through PFRA's rural and regional office locations
- linking clients to appropriate sources of expertise and providing follow-up assistance when required.

Wood turning demonstration at Shelterbelt Centre Field Day.



Issue 6

Special issue response

The federal government will continue to respond to special issues that may arise from natural disasters, trade agreements, policy changes, or international development efforts. PFRA will respond to specific needs within its range of expertise.

Activities

PFRA will retain a core capability to deliver programs and services in response to specific needs by:

- maintaining a base level of expertise developed through on-going program delivery and special responses such as the Western Grain Transition Payment Program (WGTTP)
- maintaining and upgrading specific technical and project management skills by participating in overseas projects of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other international organizations.



Land placed under permanent cover near Maple Creek, Saskatchewan.



PFRA and Egypt have a twinning arrangement for dam/barrage safety assessments in the two countries. In the top photo, PFRA employees (in hard hats) assist in the inspection of a canal gate refurbishing project in Cairo. The bottom photo is of a barrage on the Nile River. The structures on top of the barrage are Gantry cranes, used to lift the approximately 100 gates to allow the passage of water. The barrages raise the water level upstream on the Nile, which is then diverted through smaller structures to canals for irrigation purposes.



MEASURING SUCCESS

PFRA is committed to measuring its success in achieving its goals and accounting for its use of public funds. Indicators will be used to ensure the following:

- client needs for technical information on land and water resource issues are met
- financial and material assistance delivered by PFRA continues to remain an effective tool
- cooperation and partnerships with other levels of government and industry are effective tools for efficient resource use
- client expectations for high quality service are met.

Measurement of effectiveness will be undertaken through a variety of methods including formal evaluations, client surveys and program and project assessments.



Potato harvest at
Saskatchewan
Irrigation
Development
Centre.

Multi-use dam in Manitoba
controls runoff and stores
water for farm use.



PFRA RESOURCES

Financial Resources

PFRA has allocated its resources to the goals of resource care and rural growth. The following table shows the distribution over the next few years, based on currently known budgets.

Budget Allocations		Goal Area ('000\$)		Total PFRA ('000\$)
Year	Resource Type	Resource Care	Rural Growth	
1997-98	Total	27 500	34 400	61 900
1998-99	Total	27 700	32 500	60 200
1999-00	Total	27 600	12 700	40 300
2000-01	Total	27 600	12 700	40 300



Loading wheat into a truck in Manitoba.

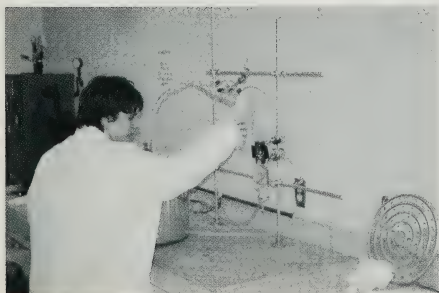
Human Resources

PFRA's greatest asset is its skilled people. Multidisciplinary teams support activities in each of PFRA's district and regional offices and special centres. Areas of professional and technical expertise range from soil conservation, water supply development, irrigation, agroforestry and rangeland management, to engineering, GIS analysis, project management, geohydrologic assessment, electronic information management and environmental and economic analysis.

PFRA's human resource allocation is approximately 700 full-time equivalents. This staff level is expected to be relatively stable over the planning period. However, it reflects a reduction of about 20 percent from 1993 when significant reorganization and staff reductions began.

Human Resource Allocations (person-years)			
Year	Resource Care	Resource Growth	Total PFRA
1997-98	498	200	698
1998-99	495	198	693
1999-00	495	198	693
2000-01	495	198	693

Planning a pipeline project
in the Weyburn District
office.



A modern lab at the Saskatchewan Irrigation
Development Centre in Outlook.

Staff Development

A meaningful contribution to the outcome of sustainable rural development can only be made through the efforts of a work force that is technically competent, multi-skilled and adaptable. PFRA will emphasize the continuous development of its employees' knowledge, skills and abilities to address emerging Prairie issues in resource care and rural growth.

Staff will be supported and encouraged to develop and maintain broad working relationships with colleagues in other organizations involved in resource-based conservation and development, and rural economic development. Involvement in multi-disciplinary working groups, and participation as organizers and presenters in workshops and conferences will also be promoted.



Performing a rangeland condition inspection.

Employees will take on new responsibilities through secondments and assignments within PFRA, other Branches of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, other federal and provincial departments and the private sector.

Staff will be also be encouraged to participate in relevant courses and programs of study, and will be supported in their initiatives to obtain post-secondary education relevant to their career development.



Collecting soil samples to test for moisture and nitrogen.

NEXT STEPS

The PFRA Business Plan outlines our response to the changes that have occurred in the first half of the 1990's, and to challenges on the horizon. It provides a road map for priority corporate directions, and responses to key resource and rural issues.

Within individual provinces, specific shorter-term PFRA objectives will be developed to reflect regional priorities. These objectives will be used to develop annual work plans which will identify the short-term actions and results needed to contribute to the desirable long-term outcome of sustainable rural development.



New shelterbelt mulched with plastic.

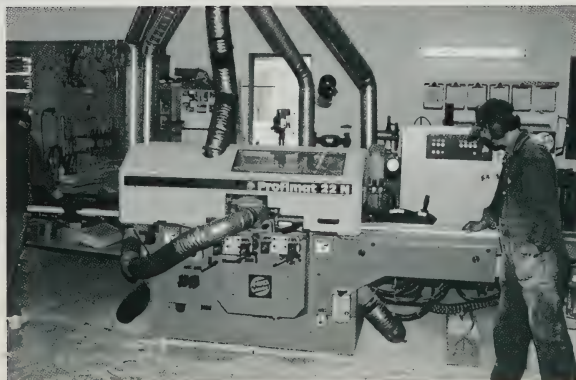


Red peppers growing in an Alberta commercial greenhouse.

These work plans will follow the principles laid out in the strategic directions section of the Business Plan, namely:

- balanced consideration of economic, environmental and social factors affecting agriculture, land and water resource use, and rural development
- local leadership and community participation in defining challenges and opportunities for land, water and rural issues
- partnerships which develop effective solutions to rural issues that cut across sectors and jurisdictions.

Large dugout stores 556 cubic decametres of water, which is used to irrigate 445 hectares of potatoes and special crops at nearby farms and a Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre satellite site south of Winkler.



A wood plank is cut, planed, sanded, and tongue and grooved to produce high quality wood flooring and wall panels, Red Deer, Alberta.

POISED FOR THE FUTURE

PFRA will continue to be a dynamic organization that adapts to change in the Prairie region. As in the past, PFRA is committed to sustainable development for healthy, vibrant rural areas.

One of PFRA's greatest strengths is its strong presence in the Prairie region and its ability to operate effectively within four provinces and across this region.

Other significant strengths are the organization's commitment to clients, technical expertise and rapid response. PFRA's locations near its clients give us the ability to bring national policies to the local level and provide local input to national policy development.

As the new millennium approaches, the people of PFRA look forward to the role their organization will play as a member of the rural Prairie community.



Field of sunflowers.

Notes

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